

FLOWERING DOGWOOD

Cornus florida L.

plant symbol = COFL2

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program



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 Northeast Wetland Flora
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Uses

Wildlife: The fruit is choice fall and winter food of the gray squirrel and fox squirrel, bobwhite, cedar waxwing, cardinal, flicker, mockingbird, robin, wild turkey, and woodpecker. The leaves and twigs are choice food for the white-tailed deer. It is not an important nesting plant.

Ornamental: It is an important ornamental tree used around homes and office buildings because of its striking display when it is in full bloom.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Cornus florida L., flowering dogwood, is a small, bushy tree which rarely attains a height of more than 40 feet or a diameter of 12 to 18 inches. The leaves are opposite one another and from 3 to 6 inches long. The deeply ridged and broken bark resembles alligator hide. Flowering dogwood has large, showy, deeply notched bracts, 4 of which surround each cluster of inconspicuous perfect flowers, in bloom from May to June. The fruit clusters on this shrub-like tree are scarlet red.

Adaptation and Distribution

Flowering dogwood is adapted to most upland sites but grows best on rich, well-drained soils on middle and lower slopes. It develops best as an understory species in association with other hardwoods.

Flowering dogwood is distributed throughout the eastern United States. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment

Plants can be grown from seed planted 1/2 inch deep in late winter.

Management

In tree harvest or timber stand improvement operations, specify that 5 or 6 dogwoods per acre be left in the forest for aesthetic purposes and as a food source for squirrels, turkeys, deer, and non-game birds. Leave all dogwoods along highways and roads.

Pests and Potential Problems

There are several wood boring insects and canker diseases that attack the main stem while others invade the branches and leaves.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Seedlings can be purchased from most commercial hardwood nurseries.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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